

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 DLOS-09 COME-00 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /039 W
-----102119 250948Z /13
R 241541Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1510

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 1802

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS, BF, US
SUBJECT: FISHERIES ISSUE - CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR JOHNSON

1. AMBASSADOR L. B. JOHNSON, BAHAMIAN AMBAS-
SADOR TO U.S., IS HERE ON HOLIDAY. I HAD MY
THIRD VISIT WITH HIM AUG 23, SPENDING OVER
AN HOUR TALKING PRINCIPALLY ABOUT THE FISHERIES
ISSUE. AMBASSADOR JOHNSON ASKED FOR THE MEETING.
HE SAID HE CONSIDERED IT BETWEEN US AND THAT IT
WAS NOT SOMETHING HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO DO BY GCOB.

2. AMB JOHNSON MADE SEVERAL POINTS WHICH
HAVE BEEN MADE PREVIOUSLY BY OTHERS AND PROBABLY
BEAR REPEATING:

(A) PUBLIC OPINION HERE IN THE BAHAMAS IS
THAT GCOB SHOULD NOT HAVE FISHERIES AGREEMENT
WITH ANYONE, BUT SHOULD RETAIN FISHING RIGHTS
FOR USE OF BAHAMIANS.

(B) FISH ARE ONE OF THEIR FEW NATURAL
RESOURCES AND SHOULD BE CONSERVED.

(C) PUBLICITY FROM FLORIDA FISHERMAN,
NEWS MEDIA, ETC., ONLY STIRS UP BAHAMIAN
PUBLIC.

(D) GCOB HAS NO PROBLEM WITH USG.
PROBLEM IS WITH FISHERMEN AND THEIR ORGANIZA-
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TIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES.

(E) GCOB IS A YOUNG GOVERNMENT STILL
TRYING TO GET ITS HOUSE IN ORDER.

(F) GCOB DOES NOT YET KNOW EXTENT OF
FISHERY RESOURCES.

(G) CUBAN GOVERNMENT AND HAITIAN GOVERN-
MENT ALSO WANT FISHING AGREEMENT.

(H) GCOB CANNOT ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH U.S. AND THEREFORE INVITE PROBLEM FROM OTHER COUNTRIES.

(I) GCOB DOES NOT CONSIDER CUBAN-AMERICANS IN SAME LIGHT AS AMERICAN CITIZENS, AND IF AN AGREEMENT WAS MADE WITH USG IT WOULD APPLY ONLY TO AMERICAN CITIZENS AND NOT TO CITIZENS OF OTHER COUNTRIES WHO ARE RESIDING IN U.S.

3. AMB JOHNSON ONLR RE-EMPHASIZED WHAT I HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, AND THAT IS THAT REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE USG PREFERS, THE GCOB DOES NOT WANT TO DISCUSS A FISHING AGREEMENT AT THIS TIME.

4. AMB JOHNSON AGREES WITH ME THAT FISHING ISSUE SHOULD NOT BE MADE PART OF ANY NEGOTIATION ON BASES, ETC. HE AGREED ALSO THAT SOONER OR LATER WE NEED TO ADDRESS OURSELVES TO THE FISHING ISSUE AND HE SAID "SOONER THAN LATER."

5. I AM TRYING TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IN OUR OPINION HERE AT THE POST, THE INTEREST OF THE FLORIDA FISHERMEN WILL BEST BE SERVED BY LETTING THE FISHERIES ISSUE LIE DORMANT. IN SPITE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THE FACT THAT ALL OF US WOULD LIKE AN AGREEMENT, WE CANNOT FORCE CONVERSATION WITH THE GCOB. THEY DO NOT WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT. CONTINUING TO GIVE THE NEWS MEDIA SOMETHING TO KEEP IN THE FOREFRONT MAY SEEM TO INDICATE THAT CERTAIN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FISHERIES GROUP ARE TRYING TO HELP THEIR CAUSE, BUT IN OUR JUDGEMENT THEY ARE DOING MORE HARM THAN GOOD.
SCHWARTZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FISHERIES, POLICIES, AMBASSADORS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NASSAU01802
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780348-0419
Format: TEL
From: NASSAU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780828/aaaaaxga.tel
Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8d0aa45c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1634003
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FISHERIES ISSUE - CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR JOHNSON
TAGS: EFIS, BF, US, (JOHNSON, L B)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8d0aa45c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014